

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
IO-13 HA-05 /084 W
-----072678 221056Z /21
R 220901Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7893
INFO AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

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E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, MY
SUBJECT: RELIGIOUS CLASHES

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 9148

1. SUBSEQUENT TO REFTTEL, ROYAL MALAYSIAN POLICE
RELEASED AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT ON THE CHASH BETWEEN
ISLAMIC MILITANTS AND HINDU TEMPLE GUARDS. THE
STATEMENT, CARRIED BY RADIO-TV MALAYSIA LAST NIGHT
AND IN ALL LOCAL NEWSPAPERS TODAY (AUG 22) PROVIDED
A DETAILED ACCOUNT OF THE INCIDENT. ACCORDING TO THE
POLICE REPORT FIVE "VANDALS" BROKE INTO THE COMPOUND
OF THE SUBRAMANIAM HINDU TEMPLE AT KERLING, KUALA
KUBU BHARU, ABOUT THIRTY MILES NORTH OF KUALA LUMPUR
ABOUT 0230 HOURS AUGUST 19, AND PROCEEDED TO SMASH
STATUES OF HINDU DEITIES. AN ALTERCATION THEN
ENSURED BETWEEN TEMPLE GUARDS AND THE "VANDALS" AND
BY THE TIME POLICE WHO HAD BEEN SUMMONED BY OTHER
TEMPLE GUARDS ARRIVED ON THE SCENE, THE MAYHEM HAD
ALREADY TAKEN ITS TOLL: ONE VANDAL WAS ALREADY DEAD,
THE OTHER FOUR VANDALS, AN ELDERLY MALAY HAJI WHO
TRIED TO INTERVENE, AND TWO OF THE TEMPLE GUARDS WERE
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INJURED. THE HAJI AND THE FOUR SERIOUSLY INJURED
VANDALS WERE HOSPITALIZED BUT THREE OF THE LATTER
SUBSEQUENTLY DIED OF THEIR INJURIES. THE REPORT
NOTED THAT ALL THOSE INVOLVED IN THE INCIDENT HAVE
BEEN DETAINED FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION AND POSSIBLE
COURT ACTION.

2. THE PRESS STATEMENT CONCLUDED WITH A WARNING THAT
"THE POLICE HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY WILL ALWAYS
TAKE FIRM ACTION AGAINST PERSONS INVOLVED IN ACTS OF
VANDALISM ON AND DESECRATION OF PLACES OF WORSHIP,
IRRESPECTIVE OF RELIGION. NO ONE WILL BE ALLOWED TO
TAKE THE LAW INTO HIS OWN HANDS."

3. COMMENT. THE STATEMENT IS REMARKABLE FOR THE
ABSENCE OF ANY MENTION OF THE RACE OF THOSE INVOLVED,
EXCEPTING THE HAJI (OR FOR THAT MATTER THEIR NAMES,
WHICH WOULD HAVE IDENTIFIED THEIR RACIAL ORIGINS).
THE CLASH WAS THUS PORTRAYED AS ONE BETWEEN TEMPLE
GUARDS AND VANDALS. ACCORDING TO ONE REPORT WE HAVE
RECEIVED, FOUR OF THE FIVE INVOLVED IN THE DESECRATION
HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED: TWO WERE UNIVERSITY OF
MALAYA STUDENTS, ONE A SCHOOL TEACHER, AND THE
FOURTH, CRITICALLY INJURED, IS A MEDICAL STUDENT FROM
THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE BACK IN MALAYSIA ON A
SCHOOL BREAK. THE SUPPOSITION IS THAT THEY WERE
INVOLVED WITH THE EXTREME FUNDAMENTALIST ISLAMIC
MOVEMENT GENERALLY KNOWN UNDER THE RUBRIC THE
"DAKWAH (MISSIONARY)MOVEMENT". THIS PHENOMONON
HAS BEEN CAUSING CONSIDERABLE CONCERN IN RECENT YEARS,
PARTICULARLY IN ACADEMIC CIRCLES, AND HAS HAD
CONSIDERABLE IMPACT AMONG MALAYS STUDYING ABROAD.

MILLER

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NNN

Message Attributes

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